

**Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, September 8, 2010 - 6PM-8PM  
Seattle City Hall Boards and Commissions Room L280

**1. Call to order and introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. SPAB members in attendance: Tom Williams (Chair), Christina Bollo, (Vice Chair), Vanessa Lund (Secretary), Mark Bandy, Jeniffer Calleja, Mark Landreneau, Kristen Lohse, Jon Morgan, Benjamin Smith

Staff and presenters: Brian Dougherty (SDOT staff liaison to SPAB); Eric Tweit (SDOT), Jessica Murphy (SDOT); Brian Hawksford (City Council)

Members of the public in attendance: Doug Beeman, James McIntosh, Jacob Struiksmma, Charles Wilkinson, Lisa Verhovek (Gates Foundation), Craig Norsen (Seneca Group), Emily Neff (EnviroIssues), Jason Biggs (WSDOT)

**2. Approval of minutes**

Tom asked for any additional comments or corrections to the July meeting minutes.

*ACTION: The July minutes were unanimously approved.*

*Note – there are no minutes from August since the meeting was a walking tour.*

**3. Public comment**

Tom thanked the members of the public for attending and asked if there was any comment. Hearing none, the public comment period was closed.

**4. Mercer West (Eric Tweit, SDOT)**

Eric presented information on the Mercer West project. The vision of the project is to provide a two-way connection between 1-5 and Elliot Avenue West. Components of the project include widening Mercer between Dexter Avenue North and Fifth Avenue North to provide three lanes in each direction; left turn lanes; wider sidewalks and a bike path; converting Mercer to a two-way street; converting Roy St. to a two-way street with bike lanes; creating a new Sixth Avenue North connection between Mercer and Harrison; and closing Broad Street to reconnect the street grid between Ninth Avenue North and Fifth Avenue North.

Two options for the Sixth Avenue North connection were explained. One option would provide a reconnected, straight, partially-covered street, and would cut through the Gates Foundation campus. The other option would feature a curved street that goes around the future Gates Foundation campus. In both options, Sixth Avenue North would extend to a T-intersection with Mercer Street.

Eric outlined several features of each option. For example, the straight option would have

additional pedestrian options but would also have greater right-of-way costs since it cuts through the Gates campus.

Various SPAB members commented on the need for improvements in this corridor.

Kristen asked about the grade and if ADA requirements needed to be met. Eric explained that the grade is expected to be 4.5 percent but Gates would need to provide emergency access to their campus – which could effectively increase the grade of the straight option.

Seth asked about traffic counts. Eric explained that the EIS would be released soon.

Christina asked if this will go ahead regardless of the tunnel outcome. Eric responded that this is a separate project.

Jon asked about pedestrian connections between Aurora and Mercer. Mark suggested considering a stairway up to SR-99.

Tom asked about costs and what is covered.

Mark L. asked about overpasses and wheelchair access. Eric explained that wheelchairs could go under Aurora.

Eric added that it's important to get to a decision point on Mercer. The Mayor asked for public input on this and the go-ahead to talk to Gates about an agreement on the land. The City Council Transportation Committee will get a preview on September 14. Full Council will hear the issue soon thereafter and could take action on September 28<sup>th</sup>. The agreement on the land is effective only if the City selects the curved option.

Ben commented that the straight option is, "superior in every way." It has additional crossings, more logical turns and that he would rather walk under a building than next to SR 99. The only downside is that it interferes with the Gates Foundation's plans.

Christina asked for clarification about what SPAB is being asked to do. Eric explained that a vote and/ or letter stating SPAB's preference would be helpful.

*ACTION: Ben moved to support the straight alignment. The motion passed. (Tom, Ben, Jon, Christina, Seth, Kristen, Jennifer and Mark L voted yes. Mark B. and Vanessa abstained.)*

Ben also suggested writing a letter. Tom added that this would need to be done this week.

### **15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Paving Project (Jessica Murphy, SDOT)**

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is planning to reconstruct most of 15th Avenue NE in the University District in 2011. This paving project is funded by the *Bridging the Gap* transportation levy.

The roadway is in extremely poor condition and carries a large traffic load. Improvements would include new curb ramps, curb bulbs, sidewalk widening at bus zones, upgraded street lighting and a new marked crosswalk at 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

During construction there will be lane closures, heavy traffic, parking and loading restrictions. SDOT will maintain one lane of traffic in each direction during weekdays. Uniformed officers will also be posted. There will be a motorized trolley fleet on weekends.

SDOT is conducting community outreach in preparation for this project.

- Mark asked where the project will start. (North of Burke Gilman Trail and Pacific)
- An SPAB member asked about signal work. (This project will not include signal work.)
- Jacob asked whether power poles and signs would be relocated. (Not within the scope of this project. But SDOT is looking at options for consolidating signs.)
- Jacob encouraged sidewalk widening.
- Kristen encouraged sign consolidation.
- Kristen asked about coordination with Metro. (Coordination with Metro is a big component. They are actively involved and will make improvements such as replacing shelters.)
- Kristen encouraged making sure that lighting coincides with bus stops.
- Ben asked if SDOT looked at options for transit-only lanes. (Not part of this project.)
- Christina mentioned using the blue tape to create a pedestrian path. ( Jessica encouraged letters of support for this because this is actually prohibited in project specifications. Brian D. asked that if people want to write about this, they should direct comments to the traffic control group.)
- One SPAB member mentioned that there needs to be better barriers when there are road and sidewalk problems such as a hole. (Jessica explained the requirements for placement of barrels.)
- Ben encouraged notification of businesses and others about this project.
- Mark L pointed out that he is familiar with some options that may be better for the visually impaired. For example, there are options for some kind of barrier that is filled with water. It can be moved around.
- Jacob asked about signal marking. (Remarking will be completed at the end of the project. )

### **Pedestrian Master Plan Review (Christina)**

Christina explained the vision of dividing up the Pedestrian Master Plan objectives among SPAB members. This would allow SPAB members to lead discussion/comments during the regular reviews with SDOT. SPAB members should send first three choices to Christina.

Ben added that he'd like to spend time hearing about what's worked, key issues, etc. Christina responded that this plan would help us accomplish this and spend less time, as a group, on small details.

Mark mentioned that there are some other plans we should be talking about – freight, bike, etc.

### **Future agenda items**

- Tom asked for nominations for future agenda items.
- Policy and planning update from Barbara and Jennifer
- NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street transit improvements
- Linden Street
- Other departments (SPU, City Light)
- Thomas Street
- Rechannelization projects

### **Round Robin**

Mark B. is working on a listing of good and bad pedestrian experiences.

Jon- went to the Linden and Dexter open houses and provided an update on the 45<sup>th</sup> street Viaduct project and the need for improvements. He stated that they aren't likely to make meaningful improvements but signage would be a big help. Jon also commented that it would be nice to have some attention and excitement around ped projects and not just bike projects and mentioned his Pike Place Market proposal.

Brian D. mentioned that improvements to 45<sup>th</sup> could be made as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan project.

Ben talked about the road diet being implemented in his neighborhood.

Mark L. recently travelled to Victoria BC. He commented on the yellow curb cuts and encouraged Seattle to think about taking a similar approach.

Jennifer mentioned that she lives near Nickerson and has noticed a lot of focus how the road diet may or may not affect traffic flow, but not much discussion about bridge openings. She asked, "Why don't boats have to wait?" Mark explained that this is an issue with the Coast Guard and that the city has tried to extend the hours. He also added that there were lane closings on the Ballard Bridge for painting during initial implementation of the road diet which hindered traffic during implementation and created some public frustration.

Kristen gave an update on her work with the 520 technical coordination group. She sent recommendations to SPAB.

Christina mentioned the painted crosswalk at John and 10<sup>th</sup> and said it is a great improvement. She also mentioned an interview she conducted with FOX - but her clip didn't air.

Tom reported on a meeting with people from San Francisco's Planning Department.

Mark mentioned a great streets design guide from San Francisco.

Tom and Christina reminded everyone to have preferences for Pedestrian Master Plan areas of focus (objectives) to Christina by the end of the week – so she can coordinate assignments.

### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 13, 6-8 PM.  
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